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Senate

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Tana Lin, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. ROSEN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on voting rights, yesterday, this Chamber had an opportunity to begin debate on protecting the voting rights of American citizens. That right, essential to any democracy, is under attack in ways we have not seen in generations.

Despite the obvious danger, Senate Republicans crushed any opportunity this Chamber had to even begin a debate on the Freedom to Vote Act. We didn't ask Republicans to sign their names to any policy. We simply asked them to come to the table so the Senate can work as intended, and they refused.

Let there be no mistake, Senate Republicans blocking debate yesterday was their implicit endorsement of the horrid new voter suppression and election subversion laws passed in conservative States across the country. When

they wouldn't debate, they said these horrid new laws that suppress voters, that subvert our elections are OK.

It is ludicrous—ludicrous—for Republicans to pretend that the Federal Government has no role to play in defense of our liberties. Of course, it does. They should read the Constitution.

But despite Republican opposition, the fight to protect our democracy is far from over in the U.S. Senate. Voting rights are too precious, too fundamental to abandon because of obstruction from the minority.

As soon as next week, I am prepared to bring another proposal to the floor, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

The Voting Rights Act has historically been bipartisan, but following the gutting of the law by recent Supreme Court rulings, the Voting Rights Act needs to be restored, and the Senate ought to, at a minimum, be permitted to debate.

The reflexive obstruction from Senate Republicans is not—is not—how the Senate is supposed to work. Not long ago, this Chamber operated differently, in a way more befitting the world's greatest deliberative body: debate, compromise, amend, and legislate—all with the purpose of helping the American people, even when people's views of how to do that differed. There was a debate and amendment.

We need to restore that legacy. We need to work to restore the Senate as the world's greatest deliberative body so we can better serve the needs of our Nation. Republicans blocking one bill after another, even from consideration, is not that.

The fight to protect our fundamental liberties is as old as the country itself, and we can take note from the lessons of history. In the aftermath of the Civil War, the majorities in Congress passed transformative measures, like the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution—and other civil rights bills—expanding liberty to tens of millions previously deprived of it.

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Shepherd of love, You have been our help in ages past. You are our hope for the years to come. As we begin today's legislative session, we pause to acknowledge Your sovereignty. Lord, You sit enthroned between the cherubim, so shower us with gifts from Your bounty.

Today, lead our lawmakers beside still waters and replenish their spirits with Your power. As they grapple with the challenges we face, give them a faith that will not shrink. Lord, provide our Senators with wisdom to hear Your voice and courage to obey Your counsel. Help them to seek Your wisdom by daily exposing themselves to the guidance of sacred Scripture.

Remind us all that success comes not by might or power but by Your Spirit.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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